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The cancellation of Claims 1-9 in favor of new Claims 10-19 is done solely because amending Claims 1-9 by brackets and underlining would be extremely cumbersome in view of the large number of editorial changes which are necessary. The cancellation of Claims 1-9, therefore, is not intended to constitute a surrender of any of the subject matter of those claims, all of which is still being claimed in Claims 10-19.

An early action on the merits is respectfully requested.

Submitted by,

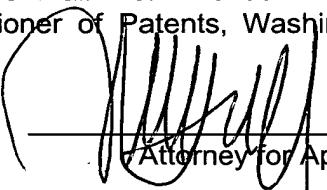
(Reg. No. 35,902)

Michael R. Hull  
Hill & Simpson  
A Professional Corporation  
85th Floor - Sears Tower  
Chicago, IL 60606  
(312) 876-0200 Ext. 3491  
Attorneys for the Applicants

**CERTIFICATE OF MAILING**

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as Express Mail No. EL345371375US in an envelope addressed to Assistant Commissioner of Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231 on December 22, 1999.

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Attorney for Applicants